

Dane County Exec. Parisi: Dane County to cap landfill, convert lands with prairie for pollinators

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Today Dane County announced that pollinators such as bees and butterflies will soon have a new home at the Dane County landfill. Dane County is currently taking proposals to plant native prairie grass on over 90 acres at the Rodefild Landfill along with land owned by Dane County Solid Waste in the Town of Westport. The goal of the project is to use county owned lands to increase habitat for pollinators that have been in decline and are critical to the food we eat.

“Pollinators such as honeybees have seen a devastating population drop due to such factors as lack of habitat and pesticides,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “This proposal to restore our county-owned land to support honeybees and other insects is one step we can take to be part of the solution.”

40 acres of the restoration will be done when part of the Rodefild Landfill is capped off Highway 12/18. The remaining lands being converted (approximately 56 acres) are located in the Town of Westport off Easy Street adjacent to the Dane County Law Enforcement Training Center. Wisconsin has seen significant losses in honeybee colonies in recent years, declining greater than 60% alone in 2014-15.

In 2015, the Dane County Pollinator Protection Task Force recommended that the county plant pollinator-friendly plants on permanently capped portions of the

landfill. The native grasses that will be planted later this summer will provide both nectar and pollen sources and also provide nesting habitat to 70% of over 400 bee species that nest in the ground. Pollinator declines are due to a number of causes: pests, pathogens, habitat loss, nutritional deficiency, insecticide exposure, and extreme weather events (e.g., drought or winter cold).

Scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of pollinators like bees, butterflies, moths, beetles and hummingbirds. Bees are the primary pollinators for our fruits and vegetables as they gather pollen to feed their young. Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants depend on pollinators to reproduce.